

GENERAL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN
<p>Comments identified as General Expressions of Concern are not specific or substantive in nature, as defined in the CEQ regulations (§1503.3 and §1503.4). That is, they are not specific in regard to the analysis or the alternatives, and they do not address the adequacy of the Draft EIS, the merits of the alternatives, or provide additional relevant information that is within the scope of the purpose and need for action. They can generally be characterized as personal opinions on resources or park management, or other statements that would not be responded to by any change in the DEIS. It should be noted that for great many of comments that express general concern about resources or other impact topics, similar but more specific comments are recorded and responded to in their respective subject areas. Due to the large volume of comments, like statements are grouped as “summary comments” and actual examples are provided. Where a comment doesn’t fit within a grouping, or is sufficiently different from other comments, it is stated in the original words of the commenter.</p>
<p><b><i>General Park Management-Mandate</i></b></p>
<p><b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b> Many people stated that snowmobilers have a right to access the parks, that they are concerned about park resources, that they observe the rules, and that the wonders of the park in the winter are especially enjoyable while snowmobiling. For example, “Snowmobilers are just as concerned about the preservation of the land and the well being of the wildlife as everyone else is.” “Snowmobilers are environmentalists who really care about the land and wildlife, while enjoying a sport that brings families closer together to provide traditional family values.” “We enjoy seeing the Park in the winter by snowmobile because we can enjoy the wonders of God’s creation.”</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b> The purpose and need for action, including discussions of laws, regulations and executive orders that apply to winter use, are presented in Chapter I of the EIS.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b> Some commenters stated that the parks should be managed like Denali NP by allowing use by dogsleds and mass transit.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b> See Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b> Some commenters feel that snowmobile use is being singled out and attacked, while in their opinion summer visitors and autos have a greater impact.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b> See Scope of Analysis and Issues Not Addressed in Chapter I of the FEIS.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b> A number of commenters stated that park resources and values should be placed above economic interests or interests of gateway communities. For example, “I only hope that when decisions are made, that the mandate the NPS has to protect park resources prevails over the pressure to enhance local economics.” “One thing that I feel is very important to address is that it appears that in almost every plan there appears to be an underlying if not blatant concern for the recreational industry over the environment.” “Natural Resources’ and ‘Wildlife’ should have much higher priority than ‘Socioeconomics’.” “The park is a part of every American’s heritage and its pristine beauty should not be sacrificed for the benefit of a handful of people engaged in the business of renting snowmobiles.” “I am concerned about gateway communities but they will find another way to make a living.”</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b> See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b> A number of commenters expressed opinions about the lack of financial feasibility of alternative B, or made general statements about Park Service’s economic responsibility.</p>

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<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of opinions were expressed that relate generally to the purpose and need for action, interpretations of NPS mandates, and how NPS performs (or doesn't perform) within the mandate. For example, "The ultimate goal is that of resource preservation." "The History of America', wrote President John F. Kennedy in 1963, 'has been the story of Americans seizing, using, squandering and belatedly protecting their natural heritage.' Why not start the new millennium by eliminating the first three elements of that list?" "Formulate a final Winter Use decision that cuts to the chase - that simply protects our natural heritage." "We are concerned about the resource damage which is occurring within the parks particularly about the air and water quality." "We need to start putting conservation before recreation, solitude before accessibility, and wildlife comfort before visitor comfort." "I don't understand why you would want to risk long term impacts on some of our most precious resources. I believe it is better to err on the preservation side of this delicate issue." "The National Park Service would not be doing its job if it did not protect the environment." "The very distinct natural beauty of Yellowstone cannot be sacrificed for any reason." "While National Parks should be accessible to all, parks like Grand Teton or Yellowstone should be principally reserved to preserve 'the wilderness of the world'." "This natural character of Yellowstone is about to be lost by accommodating too many people using the park in ways that damage the natural beauty, harmony and wild animal habitat." "Park Service is supposed to protect the park, it's wildlife and it's solitude, not to cater to snowmobilers. Please do what is mandated." "I believe that the habitats and environment of the park should be kept as natural and unpolluted (noise and air) as possible, summer and winter." "Isn't the Park Service a symbol of preservation of our natural wonders? Isn't the Park Service concerned about environmental degradation within our parks?"
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	The purpose and need for action, including discussions of laws, regulations and executive orders that apply to winter use, is presented in Chapter I of the EIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Industry had its chance and has failed to produce quiet and clean snowmobiles.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	Opinions vary on the Park Service's authority in this area. NPS has the authority to regulate the types of vehicles that can be allowed in the parks, but no authority to regulate private business or industry standards.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	General comments were made in regard to pollution, emissions relative to NPS and other legal mandates.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	General comments were made objecting to pollution controls on snowmobiles.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS, Air Quality and Public Health in Chapters III and IV.
<b><i>Taxpayers Against Snowmobile Use</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	As a non-snowmobiling taxpayer, I don't like the thought of my tax monies supporting Yellowstone if snowmobilers can use it. I don't wish to support access for recreation that damages park resources.

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<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Taxpayers For Snowmobile Use</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Yellowstone Park is a place for all people to use, summer and winter. Snowmobilers have paid for and maintained the Park through our Federal tax money, everyone has a right to use that Park. I will not be willing to continue to pay taxes to support a park that we cannot use!
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Education and Information</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Every effort should be made by the NPS to educate the American public to the sensible use of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, and to keep our parks open and available for the public to enjoy.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Desired Conditions in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Enforcement</i></b>	
<b>COMMENT:</b>	In fact, the average of citations written per winter in Yellowstone for off-road snowmobile use from 1995-1999 was over 50 (23% of 890 snowmobile citations were for off-road travel or for closed areas, p. 101). We can assume that a significant number of violations are discovered or reported, and that a significant number are discovered but the violator is not caught so no citation is ever written.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	The Park Service's enforcement efforts are rigorous to the extent allowed by funding and personnel.
<b>COMMENT:</b>	Despite the laws and regulations, snowmobiles are going almost everywhere. The parks currently are so occupied with the frontcountry users that the surrounding communities have free access to our most pristine treasures. That nothing has been done to stop the vulgarity up to this point is truly criminal when one thinks that the "Organic Act" supposedly guides Park management decisions.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	The Park Service's enforcement efforts are rigorous to the extent allowed by funding and personnel.
<b>COMMENT:</b>	I believe that the burden of control should fall largely on the shoulders of the outfits that make a business of renting out snowmobiles and the associated paraphernalia.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	Concessionaires and permittees are subject to terms and conditions that convey responsibility in the area. Authority and ultimate responsibility lies with NPS.

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<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of comments related general concerns about enforcement, opinions about how enforcement is or isn't being done, speed limits, funding for enforcement programs, the need for increased penalties, judgments about various user groups who violate regulations, et al. Some comments are based notably in misinformation or uncertainty about national parks versus national forests, or about the scope of analysis for this EIS. For example, "Vigorously enforce speed limits, apart from other restrictions that should be imposed to maintain the natural ecosystem and bring back peace to Nature." "The Park Rangers were mostly unable to keep the snowmobilers under control." "Plowing roads into the interior of the parks also presents major problems for wildlife and for enforcement of illegal use by snowmobiles." "When you don't have the manpower to control salt baiting of elk at your borders now, can you promise you'll be ready to control back country abuses?" "The penalty for misuse of snowmobiles has to be made severe enough that there is a powerful incentive to obey the law." "To enforce the ban on snowmobilers in Yellowstone, are you planning to shoot people who trespass?"
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	The Park Service's enforcement efforts are rigorous to the extent allowed by funding and personnel.
<b><i>Opposed to Closing Yellowstone</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of comments expressed concern about closing Yellowstone National Park. For example, "I don't think that shutting down Yellowstone is the solution." "Please do not close this beautiful area to families and older people." "Please leave the park open all winter." "Please enter my name on record as being in favor of continued winter use in Grand Teton and Yellowstone Parks via snowmobile, as well as snowcoach, skis, and snowshoes." "I am against any more closures of our public lands." "Clinton-Gore extremists want to close the park."
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	There is no proposal to close the parks.
<b><i>Expressed Need for Compromise</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	For example, "I believe that if the Park Service and the snowmobile community can work together and utilize good management practices, all can benefit." "We must remember that some sacrifices are needed on our part in order for the best to be done for our parks." "We hope that the Park Service will find a way to bring the snowmobilers and the die-hard environmentalists to one table to thrash out a compromise." "We must work together to make Yellowstone a great place for everyone." "Simple reasoning tells us that the likely solution to any problem lies between the extremes."
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See Scope of Analysis and Issues Not Addressed in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>COMMENT:</b>	The "desired condition" includes reference to the need for cooperative work between the NPS and other entities. For that to occur, the planning process should foster a spirit of cooperation. However, the manner in which this document has been developed has tended to disenfranchise potential cooperators.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	The document has been developed in accordance with NEPA (CEQ regulations 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. See DEIS and FEIS Coordination and Consultation in Chapter I and Appendix A.

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<b><i>Concern about Equity for Different User Groups</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Many people expressed the opinion that the parks should be open to all users. Most such comments were voiced from the perspective that their particular user group is being victimized by the other group and the park service. In many cases, it is difficult to tell from the context of the comment which user group is being represented, and which is the source of complaint. For example, "Please take the time to gather unbiased 'facts' about the presence of responsible snowmobiling in these areas before you bend to the political and special interest group pressure on such an important multiple use issue." "I believe the Park Service is not acting in the public's best interest but is operating on its own agenda and the agendas of narrow minded and selfish so-called environmental groups." "It is unfair to limit the winter use to only a 'few' that have the time and physical ability to access the park on skis, these are the few and the visitors on snowmachines are the 'many'." "I do not like the fact that the snowmobilers would have the park for 18 hours - from 5 A.M. to 11 P.M. each day." "Cross-country skiers and snowshoe enthusiasts should have more quiet time - why not a more equal split?" "To eliminate an entire user group without sound research -- and at the expense of the natural resource -- is wrong." "We need someone bold and brave enough to stand up and do the right thing for the park and not be influenced by Senators who are influenced by money." "It is a great privilege to use our parks and a noisy few should not be allowed to ruin the environment for the rest." "NPS is taking the side of the cross-country skiers." "I think the park service should give snowmobiles equal rights to access points." "I do not believe that the NPS should impose their own standards such as denying access to certain groups by plowing or closing roads, or by emission or sound control." "Managing by excluding a particular user group is not a proper way to manage. It's not fair, and in a sense a form of discrimination." "How come only the low-impact users like backpackers, river runners, and mountaineers get saddled with quotas and restrictions? Why can't you impose these on the motor lovers also?"
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some comments expressed the need for equity in relation to all users, much as those who articulated the need for compromise.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Concern about Access for Seniors and Handicapped</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of comments express the presumption of closure of the parks to snowmobiles and note that this action would eliminate available access by seniors and handicapped people. For example, "Its time to stop any more closures to our senior citizens and physically disabled people." "Some folks have physical disabilities that make it impossible to ski into the park, and riding a bus or snowcoach certainly does not give you the experience of really appreciating the grandeur of the park, while snowmobiling can get you a real feel for the Park."
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS. Access by mass transit, which requires allowances for handicapped visitors, versus access by snowmobile is a matter of personal preference not accessibility.

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<b><i>Concern about Available Areas for Motorized Use</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Comments stated general concerns from snowmobilers that land restrictions are locking out motorized uses, and from others stating that snowmobile use curtails enjoyment by the greatest number of people who would appreciate nonmotorized forms of recreation. Many comments indicated concern about closures that may happen outside the parks. For example, "I favor no plan that will shut down motorized access on any Federal Lands, especially in our National Parks!" "Expand use, not restrict it. Account for changes in machines that make them cleaner and quieter." "Individuals and groups who filed suits against the NPS are in the wrong and want to exclude everyone from winter use of the park." "To deny this wonderful experience, being at peace with oneself while absorbing some of the most beautiful scenery would surely be a crime." "The continued use and enjoyment by the people to use snowmobiles should be available." "We are all very concerned about the possibility of losing one of our favorite riding areas." "A true experience of beauty that needs to remain accessible for winter recreation vehicle use." "I feel our public land use should be preserved as is, not taken away!" "If you cut snowmobiling or make it impossible for a machine to meet your criteria, you will have essentially cut out a major income from, and use, of public land." "Anything that diminishes our ability to enjoy snowmobiling across the country is a threat to further closures, and eventually complete denial of access to any areas." "We realize it's a privilege to ride on public lands, but it's a privilege that's getting increasingly smaller as time goes by." "We keep losing land around Montana and Wyoming, and pretty soon we are all going to be locked out as far as snowmobilers." "I represent snowmobile readers, nearly 160,000 strong, nearly all of who are frustrated, angry, and fed up with the way we're being pushed out of public lands."
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Snowmobile Trails</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENTS:</b>	<p>A number of commenters wanted the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail or the "Grand Loop" experience in YNP to be closed.</p> <p>A number of commenters wanted the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail or the "Grand Loop" experience in YNP to be maintained.</p> <p>Some commenters wanted the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail to be moved or made safe and usable during other seasons.</p>
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS, and alternatives in Chapter II.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of commenters questioned the appropriateness of moving the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail to a new location.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS, alternatives in Chapter II, and effects in Chapter IV.
<b>COMMENT:</b>	If the Continental Divide Trail is not relocated off of the highway then I would suggest that the trail be discontinued because of lack of interest and that the Potholes be reopened. The Potholes were far more popular than the Continental Divide Trail. The Potholes were closed as a tradeoff for the Continental Divide Trail. If any Winter Use Plan includes closing the Continental Divide Trail, then it should also include opening the Potholes.

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<b>RESPONSE:</b>	In the decision notice and finding of no significant impact approving the CDST, it was noted that the rule change recommended for GTNP is to permanently close the Potholes area because it is recommended for wilderness designation. The decision does not indicate there was a tradeoff between CDST and Potholes.
<b>Seasonal Closures</b>	
<b>COMMENT:</b>	Under current usage and policy roads are closed to public usage between seasons and are not reopened until designated dates. This policy allows usage by Park personnel and others for so called administrative purposes at public expense.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	NPS is required under its mandates to actually manage the parks. This is a year-round task.
<b>Parks Should be Closed to Motorized Use</b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of comments expressed concern about the park and its resources, and stated that the park should be closed for purposes of protection.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some commenters indicated that if the park is closed to some, then it should be closed to all.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	A number of comments stated that snowmobiles should not be allowed in the parks. Some comments included general rationale for this: because they are not compatible with other resources, or that they don't belong, or for a number of other reasons. For example, "Snowmobiles are o.k. on National Forests but not in National Parks." "Snowmobiles have no place in our great and beautiful National Parks." "Snowmobiles do not belong in our national parks until they can be used without noise and air pollution." "Those blasted machines are terrible, noisy, they pollute, they frighten animals and like SUVs and jet skis, and should not be allowed in National Parks." "Snowmobiling is known for its damage to park resources and should be outlawed in the parks." "The use of snowmobiles in a national park is certainly a miscarriage of the intent for national park use." "Snowmobiles are hardly compatible with protecting and enjoying our country's National Parks." "I have been in years past a snowmobiler. It is a fun activity. I do not think that it belongs in the National Park system." "I am very strongly opposed to snowmobiles being allowed to destroy the environment and threaten the wildlife in our national parks." "I strongly believe that snowmobiles are incompatible with the more important goal of wildlife preservation within the National Parks." "This form of recreation [snowmobiling] is totally incompatible in Yellowstone, and you know it!" "I do not believe that snowmobiling and its negative environmental record are consistent with the Park's mandate." "Snowmobile use is incompatible with winter wildlife and with the pristine quiet of these areas in winter." "The NPS should determine whether any snowmobile use is appropriate for national park settings." "I think the national parks have a distinct mission that sets them apart from other federal and state lands that can provide the recreational experiences that snowmobilers are seeking. I do not feel that the parks are appropriate places for motorized recreation."
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.

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<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some comments stated that snowmobiles should not be allowed in the parks except for emergency rescue.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some comments stated that all recreational motorized use should be eliminated in the parks, including snowcoaches. For example, “Can you fend off other ATVs, aerial trams, jet-skiing, heli-skiing, paragliding, ice-boating, whitewater kayaking, and future forms of recreation that are not yet even visible on the horizon?” “In addition to restricting snowmobiles and ski jets we should also restrict RVs and outright disallow use of generators in camping areas.” “Snowmobiles in Yellowstone are a perfect example of why off-road vehicle use must not be allowed to become improperly established on public lands without a thorough examination of all potential impacts.” “Snowmobiles, jet skis and A.T.Vs are turning America's National Parks into techno-Disneylands.” “I believe those who developed our NPS philosophy would be strongly opposed to the continued development and increase of mobile recreational use when it is so devastating to wildlife and the parks themselves.”
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See National Park Service Mandates and Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS.
<b><i>Do Not Regulate Backcountry Skiers</i></b>	
<b>COMMENT:</b>	I think skiers can regulate themselves. As Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka and F.J. Haynes discovered in the winter of 1886-87 backcountry skiing and camping is in the truest sense experiencing Yellowstone’s Winter Wonderland. Please don’t take that away.
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	See Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS, and alternatives in Chapter II.
<b><i>No Additional Motorized use</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some commenters stated they wanted no new winter motorized routes, expanded areas or other amenities for motorized use.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See Decision to be Made in Chapter I of the FEIS, and alternatives in Chapter II.
<b><i>Concern About Motorized Use Being Displaced</i></b>	
<b>SUMMARY COMMENT:</b>	Some comments stated that snowmobiles would be displaced to national forests where there are already problems. The note that displacement would cause additional damage and the forest service would follow suit and shut down use on the forests.
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE:</b>	See Scope of Analysis in Chapter I of the FEIS, Impacts on Adjacent Lands in Chapter IV.
<b>COMMENT:</b>	Have you thought about the likely displacement of snowmobiles to other, traditionally quieter, areas of the park when they can no longer enter through West Yellowstone?
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	See Impacts on Adjacent Lands in Chapter IV of the FEIS, as well as Appendix J.